2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Kukwe

house. Then she goes in and steals a piece of firewood from the hut[1] and runs off with it, laughing. The officiant pursues her and makes her drop it and gives her medicine, while the company cry: 'A thief, a thief!' She takes the firewood back to her husband's house. 'It is a sign that she has entered her father's house, just as the spear is a sign that she has entered the house of another husband.' In rich families the new husband sends a bull which is killed and eaten at the ritual.

Our informants were agreed that 'there is no fear of the gaping cough if a woman runs away from her husband and goes to a lover', and in practice no ritual is performed when she visits her father after divorce and re-marriage, but it is perhaps significant that such a situation could scarcely have arisen in the past, since divorce by agreement rarely, if ever, occurred. An adulterer fled, if he could, with his lover to another chiefdom, breaking off all relations with her kin.

(3) *The overt purpose and symbolism*

Now we turn to the Kukwe interpretation of events. Our two principal informants here were Mwasalemba, an elderly pagan man, brother to the chief Perekem, whose wife, Syungu, acted as officiant at rituals in the chief's family, and Kakune, a young doctor who had learnt the medicines from his mother. Mwasalemba was much more coherent than Syungu herself, and his interpretation was confirmed by Kakune and numerous other informants. Again I give the interpretation of the two principal informants without any editing other than placing consecutively statements made on different occasions.

i. *Mwasalemba's interpretation.* (Recorded by G. W. and translated by him soon afterwards.)

Mwasalemba: Perhaps a youth, perhaps a girl, runs mad; he runs about naked so that we say: 'He's mad, why doesn't he cover himself?' He goes to the place of defaecation and takes filth and eats it: he goes into people's houses and takes things, he might even take some things from you, from a European, without fear; he knows not what he does. Sometimes, after a visit to a doctor, he recovers altogether and never has the fit again—that is the lesser kind of madness. But sometimes he recovers and then the fit takes him again later—that is the more serious

[1] The hut (*ntaki*) consists of horizontal beams running as well level across a portion of the hut. Here every married woman keeps a supply of dry firewood. It is her private store-place which may not be touched without her permission.

12: Blegaard E-5 (1955) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

342 353 parts. The partition wall was bamboo and mud. A doorway gave on to the inner part, where Tufwene had her bed.

354 There were two hearths, one in each room. The front one was not used. In the outer room was a bed for guests—a common feature of all houses. Tufwene was thought to be well off, and she had plenty of carrying rings, used by the 482 women when they carry loads, often very heavy, on their heads. The inner room was used for stores, including a number of earthen jars. She had these very fine, 352 low stools. I saw them outside in the sun, but their usual place was no doubt in the outer room, which had the character of a workroom. Here were the large 412 wooden mortar and its long pestle; also the grinding stone and in a corner the small mat, the *ukyanya*, which is used to take up the newly ground flour. There 417 was also the ladder, used for fetching down firewood from the loft; you could see 415 the hen's nest, and the large water jar with its painted bottom glazed on three sides.

415 The third *isinga* belonged to an eighty-year-old woman whose husband had [769] died. She told me how every day she would fill a fine, decorated bamboo mug [53] with milk for him! These mugs, seen in all the houses, usually have geometrical

342 231 352 353

Houses belonging to Malia Ulwyekanya and her husband.

a. Detail of *isinga*, outer wall. 1, tree fern stem joined to bamboo pole—note aperture for liquid manure; 2, bamboo pole with plant fibre windings; 3, split bamboo.—b, Malia's *isinga*.—c. Plan of *isinga*. 1, bed of the man; 2, iron chests for garments; 3, door; 4, posts supporting ceiling; 5, hen's nest; 6, hoes and pestle for the maize mortar; 7, hearth; 8, chests; 9, bed of the grandchildren; 10, mortar from hollowed out trunk; 11, low partition; 12, posts for tying cattle; 13, coarse past to top of roof.